

The recommendations set forth in the **Pathways to Prosperity** were formulated into an action plan with the intent of replacing the state's 1994 School-to-Work Transition Act with the Education and Economic Development Act. The new act would require a conceptual change in the educational curriculum, replacing the grade-to-grade/secondary to post-secondary progression with an individualized seamless-cluster-of-study approach. While the draft legislation was introduced in 2003, it has yet to be enacted at this writing.

The SC Chamber of Commerce has an intimate relationship with the SC Legislature, the Governor and of course the Department of Commerce, which will be the State's new administrative entity for WIA programs. The Chamber closely monitors and contributes to the development and progress of all legislation that would affect the business community, economic development and now workforce development. The SC Chamber was one of three state chambers awarded a Workforce Innovation Networks (WINs) grant in 2003. The Chamber joined decision-makers from each entity currently involved in workforce development into a coordinating council with the task of developing and forwarding a plan within two years. The general intent of the plan was to make the state's workforce development system more effective, efficient, accessible, employer-driven, and advancement-focused.

When the SC Legislature failed to enact the SC Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) during the 2003 session, the workgroup responsible for developing the application for the WIA§503 Incentive Grant submitted a proposal to implement some of the concepts of the EEDA in competitively selected schools across the state. As stipulated in the WIA legislation, WIA, Adult Education and Carl Perkins Act entities collaborated on this venture; the SC Legislature was consulted with respect to development of the application and the Governor was a signatory. The schools are now approaching the end of the grant period and program evaluation results are expected to follow.

**V.J. Describe how the State will take advantage of the flexibility provisions in WIA for waivers and the option to obtain approval as a workflex State pursuant to § 189(i) and § 192.**

The State plans to request the following waivers:

- 1. Increase the youth five percent (5%) eligibility window to ten percent (10%) for Local Workforce Investment Areas who are currently using their 5% window to serve youth who are not low income.*
- 2. Waiver to serve youth who receive reduced or free lunch under the National School Lunch Act. Youth in this category will be included in the definition of low income for eligibility determination and reporting purposes.*
- 3. Waiver to increase the limit on funds transfer between the Adult and Dislocated workers funding streams to fifty percent (50%).*
- 4. Waiver to use Rapid Response funds for Incumbent Worker Training.*

- 5. Reduce the requirement of fifty percent (50%) employer match for customized training to twenty-five percent (25%) employer match for small businesses. Small businesses will be defined as businesses with 100 and or less employees.*
- 6. Increase the employer reimbursement for On-the-Job Training (OJT) to seventy-five (75%) reimbursement for small businesses. Small businesses will be defined as businesses with 100 and or less employees.*
- 7. Waive the requirement that Dislocated Workers be enrolled in training by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> week after lay-off in order to receive needs-related payments.*

## **VI. Major State Policies and Requirements**

**Describe major State policies and requirements that have been established to direct and support the development of a Statewide workforce investment system not described elsewhere in this Plan as outlined below. (§ 112(b)(2).)**

**VI.A. What State policies and systems are in place or planned to support common data collection and reporting processes, information management, integrated service delivery, and performance management? (§§ 111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(B).)**

The Virtual One-Stop System integrates the required performance measures and includes the capability to generate on-demand reports. The on-line system reports and the ad hoc reports are used to evaluate the efficiency, performance, and effectiveness of the workforce system. Each quarter, the State requests wage records from the Unemployment Insurance Division of the South Carolina Employment Security Commission and Wage Record Interstate System (WRIS). In order to further enhance our performance, the State is planning to join the Federal Employment Data Exchange Project. We are reprogramming our tracking system to collect the additional data elements and revised reporting requirements for the Common Measure Policy.

Desktop and on-site monitoring are conducted at both the state and local levels. During the monitoring process state staff reviews local area policies and processes for compliance with the WIA law and regulations. Performance monitoring coupled with the ability to view and track user service data enhances and improves both the state's and local areas' ability to make effective WIA program policies.

In order to further enhance our ability to track services across programs, we plan to interface VOS with the state job matching (Wagner-Peyser) system. The interface will allow employers to place job orders and allow customers to perform job searches directly online. Employers will have access to an array of recruitment services, labor market data, human resource information, and links to other government resources.